

In introducing this book last week—we learned that John actually states the purpose or goal of the book in Jn.20:30-31—"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name..."

Furthermore—I mentioned last week—the verbs could be rendered—"these are written that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that continuing to believe you may have life in His name"—in other words—John had a twofold purpose in writing this gospel—[1] to instruct saints about Christ and to encourage them to look to Him, and [2] to instruct sinners about Christ and encourage them to look to Him...

Now—before we come to v6ff—I want to say a few brief words about John's prologue—the word "prologue" literally means—pro (first) longue (words)—John's first words or introduction—it's generally agreed on by scholars that John has an important purpose in his prologue—and that's to introduce certain themes that will be used throughout the book...

Thus—within the prologue there's various key words—that John uses again and again in the chapters that follow—in other words—most of what we get in the book we have introduced within these first 18 verses—for example, [1] witness (24)—here John the Baptist bears witness of Christ, throughout the book we'll see others bearing witness of Christ, even the Father, and His miracles, [2] light (23)—repeatedly John makes the contrast between light and darkness and our Savior Himself often refers to Himself as the Light of the world, [3] life (48)—spiritual and eternal life is repeatedly attributed to Christ...

[4] World (80)—while this word is used with various meanings—most often it refers to the Gentile world in contrast to the Jews, [5] Son [of God] (30)—again and again our Savior refers to Himself as the Son and the Son of God, and [6] believe (60)—this is a key word used throughout the book which fits John's express purpose for the book—"these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name..."

Thus—within these verses (6-11)—John fundamentally points out three things—the nature of the gospel ministry, the nature of Christ as the TRUE Light, and the nature of fallen and depraved man—these three go together—man is natively in darkness—God in His infinite kindness sends gospel preachers—who point them to the Light...

- I. John the Baptist—vv6-8
- II. The True Light—v9
- III. Fallen Mankind—v10-11

I. John the Baptist—vv6-8

1. From v6 there's a rather abrupt transition—within vv1-5 he spoke about the Word—now about John the Baptist...
2. This contrast may be the reason he expressly says—"there was a man sent from God"—a man in contrast to the Godman...
3. [1] His name was John—the name John literally means—"Jehovah is a gracious giver" or "a gracious gift from Jehovah..."
4. Now—most likely John received this name from his parents—given the fact he was born to them in old age...
5. Lk.1:5-7—"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years..."
6. Lk.1:59-64—"So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. 60 His mother answered and said, No; he shall be called John. 61 But they said to her, There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name. 62 So they

- made signs to his father -- what he would have him called. 63 And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, His name is John. So they all marveled. 64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God..."
7. [2] His mission was from God, v6—"there was a man sent from God"—the Gk word *apostello* means—to send forth...
 8. The point being—John did not send himself—he was sent by God—he came backed with divine authority...
 9. [3] His ministry was to bear witness to Christ, v7—"this man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light..."
 10. To "bear witness" is to testify—it's to tell others about something you know, witnessed, or experienced first hand...
 11. For example, throughout the book of Acts—the apostles were to bear witness or testify of Christ's resurrection...
 12. Acts 4:33—"And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all..."
 13. In fact—a necessary qualification for becoming an apostle—was that you've personally witnessed the resurrection...
 14. Thus—John was to "bear witness" to what was revealed to him—byway of personal and special revelation...
 15. This of course was John's calling in a special way—he alone—was sent from God—as the forerunner of the Light...
 16. Matt.11:10-11—"For this is *he* of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.' 11 Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he..."
 17. [4] His goal was that people would believe, v7b—"that all through him might believe"—that is—in Christ...
 18. Notice—sinners believe the gospel "though the preacher"—that is to say—they need to hear about the light...
 19. Acts 19:4—"Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus..."
 20. Now—it's important to notice the prepositional phrase—"that all through him might believe"—that is—through John...
 21. In other words—while John was NOT the light—nevertheless—sinners would believe through his message...
 22. Rom.10:14—"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher..."
 23. [a] Preachers must point sinners to Christ—this is his grand purpose—to point his hearers to Christ as the Light...
 24. Preachers are NOT to preach themselves—that is—messages filled with allot of autobiographical information...
 25. I was thought it was commendable—when Ian Murray sought to write a biography on Arthur Pink—but found he rarely spoke of himself...
 26. The same is true of most preachers of days gone by—you can read through entire volumes and find little if any personal information...
 27. Now—obviously it's not wrong to mention yourself—but who are we sent to preach—not ourselves—but the light...
 28. Now—this doesn't deny the need to point out man's darkness—but the focus must—bearing witness to the light...
 29. [b] Preachers must preach what they know—that is—preachers must preach as witnesses of what they preach...
 30. Preachers are not only to bear witness of the person and work of Christ—but as one who's experienced that light...

31. Volbeda—"The preacher worthy of the name, the preacher after God's heart, then, must proclaim the written Word of God indeed; but he must preach it – and that precisely makes it preaching – as it has come to light in his own heart and mind..."
32. Thus, and this is very important—while preachers do not preach their experience—they do preach FROM their experience...
33. 1Jn.1:1-3—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life - the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us - that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ..."
34. [c] Preachers must preach with salvation as a goal—that is—we must not be content with communicating facts...
35. My friends—we must ever maintain the distinction between the preacher's DESIRE and the preacher's ABILITY...
36. While he lacks the ability to convert ONE hearer—nevertheless—he greatly desires the salvation of EVERY hearer...
37. Preachers must preach, and Christians must witness—"that all through our efforts"—might believe and be saved..."
38. CHS—"You may have sound doctrine and yet do nothing unless you have Christ in your spirit. I have known all the doctrines of grace to be unmistakably preached, and yet there have been no conversions; for this reason, that they were not expected and scarcely desired..."

II. The True Light—v9

A. He is the true Light

1. Throughout this passage—Christ is described as the Light—that is—the source of spiritual or religious knowledge...
2. Thus—I suggest—that John meant at least three things when he used this phrase—"He is the TRUE Light"...
3. [1] He's the TRUE light as apposed to all false lights—that is—as apposed to the false lights of Satan and his messengers...
4. 2Cor.11:13-14—"For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light..."
5. All over the world—men are following false lights—lights that claim to bring you to God—but in fact do not...
6. [2] He's the TRUE light as apposed to all borrowed light—both ministers and the church are referred to as lights...
7. But—all the light within Christians is what we might call a borrowed light—a light derived from the Light...
8. Perhaps we can illustrate it with the sun and moon—light is native to the sun while it's borrowed in the moon...
9. Thus—our Savior Himself referred to John as a "burning and shining light"—that is—a simmer or borrowed light...
10. Jn.5:35—"He was the burning and shining light"—the Gk word rendered "light" refers—"to a candle or lamp..."
11. Matt.5:14-16—"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven..."
12. Thus—any light present in Christians—is there because of their union with Christ—"the light of the world..."
13. This is underscored by John in both verse 7 and verse 8—"This man came for a witness...He was not that Light..."

14. Jn.1:25—"and they asked him, saying, Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet..."
15. [3] He's the TRUE light in fulfillment to the promised light—John often uses true in the sense of fulfillment...
16. For example, Jesus is the "true bread" in contrast to the OT manna, and the "true vine" in contrast to OT imagery...
17. Likewise—Jesus is the "true light" in that he's the fulfillment of the types and prophecies associated with the OC...
18. That is—within the OT, we find several types or shadows of Christ, which use light in some form or fashion...
19. For example—the cloud that warmed and protected the people at night—was a pillar of fire—that gave light...
20. 1Jn.2:8—"Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining..."
21. Here John speaks of the "passing darkness" and the "shining light" as descriptions of the old and new covenants...
22. The OC, with its comparative darkness, was "passing away"—it was giving way to the brighter light of the NC...
23. Isa.60:1-3—"Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising..."

B. He gives light

1. V9—"That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world"—this phrase is difficult...
2. Generally speaking—if were to consult the best of the commentaries—there have been three broad suggestions...
3. I want to present them in the order of probability—that is—leaving the most likely to the third and last option...
4. [1] He rationaly enlightens every man—this interpretation is the less likely and is built upon a misconception...
5. This verse can be rendered in two ways—"He gives light to every man coming into the world" (KJV, NKJV)—"there was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man" (NIV, NAS, ESV)...
6. In other words—the phrase—"coming into the world" can either refer to "every man" or to "the true light"...
7. Personally—I think it's much more likely that it refers to the "true light" or to—Christ's historical ministry...
8. The primary reason I suggest this—is throughout John's gospel—he repeatedly refers to Christ as coming into the world...
9. V10—"He was in the world"—that is—"the true Light" came into the world—"giving light to every man..."
10. Thus—there are those who understand the phrase "coming into the world" to refer to gift of reason at their creation...
11. This is the view of such worthy, and usually very sound exegetes such as—A.W. Pink, John Gill, and John Calvin
12. Now—let me simply say—this is a truth found in Scripture—namely—every person is born enlightened with reason...
13. That is—every person has a conscience, upon which the law remains in part, which separates us from creation...
14. Some commentators, based largely upon v3, assume this is what John here means—the enlightenment of reason...

15. The problem with this view is simple—nowhere else within Scripture do we find this language applied to reason...
16. Clearly, throughout this context, John uses the concept of light as synonymous to life—spiritual and eternal...
17. [2] He potentially enlightens every man—that is—He potentially enlightens every man who hears the gospel...
18. Simply put—this view maintains—that Christ, through the message of the gospel, brings light to every man...
19. This view is held by several capable exegetes or commentators such as—"J.C. Ryle and William Hendriksen...
20. Now—obviously—every man by nature rejects the light—but nevertheless, light is brought to all without exception...
21. Jn.12:35-36—"Then Jesus said to them, A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light. These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them..."
22. Here—our Savior speaks about His own person and public ministry—as the light being with unsaved people...
23. [3] He savingly enlightens every man—this is without doubt the most obvious and likely meaning of this verse...
24. Simply stated—Christ, through the message of the gospel, savingly enlightens every man who believes from the heart...
25. Thus—by every man, is not meant every man without exception—but every man without distinction—Jew and Gentile...
26. Every single man—Jew or Gentile—who has his soul enlightened unto salvation—is enlightened by Christ...
27. Jn.3:19-21—"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God..."
28. Isa.42:6-7—"I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house..."
29. Lk.2:29-32—"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel..."
30. Now—what I want to do is—digress for a few minutes and expand upon the imagery associated with the light...
31. That is—what exactly does John mean when he says—Christ, the Light of the world, enlightens every man...
32. What does it mean to be enlightened—or perhaps I can put it like this—what does it mean to be—given light...
33. I can explain this with three words—understanding, holiness, and joy—these explain what it means to be enlightened...
34. That is—"light" is associated with three things in Scripture—knowledge, holiness (purity), and joy (or happiness)...
35. [a] Understanding—throughout Scripture—darkness describes ignorance and light understanding or knowledge...
36. Ps.82:5—"They do not know, nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are unstable..."
37. 2Cor.4:6—"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ..."
38. [b] Holiness—Scripture uses "darkness" to describe sin, impurity, and wickedness—the opposite of purity...

39. Thus—to walk in darkness is to walk in wickedness—to live in darkness is to live within the realm of sin and evil...
40. Eph.5:8-11—"For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*..."
41. [c] Joy—throughout Scripture "darkness" is used to describe misery, suffering, affliction, gloom, and sorrow...
42. Now—this is true in general—for example—when the sun's out and shining—there's a heightened sense of joy...
43. Esther 8:15-17—"So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. 16 The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor. 17 And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them..."
44. Ps.4:6-8—"There are many who say, "Who will show us any good?" LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us. 7 You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased. 8 I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety..."
45. Matt.4:16—"The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned..."

III. Fallen Mankind—v10-11

1. Verses 10-11—among other things—teaches the Biblical and yet humbling doctrine of man's total depravity...
2. [1] He was in the world—this refers to His incarnation—or, to the fact, the eternal *logos* entered His own creation...
3. Jn.17:11—"Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are..."
4. [2] He made the world—that is—the One who has now entered the world—is the very One who created it...
5. [3] He was unknown by the world—"and the world did not know Him"—that is—mankind within darkness...
6. This is the most common way in which the word "world" is used by John—it refers to fallen and foolish man...
7. It doesn't refer to the trees and water—but, to native mankind, especially the Gentiles, scattered throughout the earth...
8. [4] He was not received by His own, v11—"He came to His own [Jews], and His own did not receive Him..."
9. From the broader term "world" John narrows his focus to "His own"—that is—Christ came first to the Jews [Matt.10:5; 15:24]...
10. [a] Man by nature is ignorant—he doesn't understand nor does he even care—he's simply in spiritual darkness...
11. [b] Man by nature is rebellious—he's unwilling to believe—even though he hears the truth he refuses to believe it...
12. [c] Man by nature is murderous—he's not only unable and unwilling to come to the Light—but he hates it....
13. I want to leave this sermon, not with verses 10-11—but I want to simply peak into the next two verses, 12-13...
14. V12—"BUT...as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name..."
15. That is—regardless how natively ignorant, rebellious, and murderous man is—some, Jew and Gentile, will believe...